

14 January 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Records Management

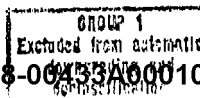
1. On 5 October 1971 you requested Colonel White and me to organize an IG review of our records management situation and recommend how it might be improved. Attached is the review submitted by the Acting IG. Grossly summarized, it states that we do not have much of a records administration program but that, thanks to Colonel White's decisive move limiting the amount of space for retired records and controlling the acquisition of file cabinets and safes, we are not facing a crisis in the near future. Further, the stimulation of finite space in which to retire records has caused various offices to attend to records administration. Lastly, it says that CIA has a reputation of having one of the better records management programs in the Government.

2. I have reviewed the entire file and gone through several briefings on this subject. With your permission, I will continue to prosecute the matter somewhat along the following lines:

(a.) We should maintain a decentralized administration of our records, but we should breathe some life into the Agency's Records Management Board in order to encourage cross-fertilization and develop better periodic reporting on the status of the program as a whole. For this purpose, I would propose that the Board be constituted to have representation from each directorate, have as its Chairman the Agency Records Administration Officer, and report to the Executive Director (rather than as at present to the Support Services Staff of the DD/S). I think this is a possible compromise between the good features of decentralization and the need for a beginning at drawing our approach to this complex program together.

b. We need to distinguish the different kinds of records as much as the offices which handle them. Some of our records

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are important basic reference tools (e. g., CI files); some are analyst working files with a moderate life requirement (e. g., CRS files); some are formal publications by the Agency which are distributed elsewhere in the Government with source concealment and which could therefore be considered under the category of general Government records rather than CIA's unique problem of source protection; and some of course are operational records and documents. The approaches to these different types of records could be different, and their variation permits a different disposition of them (e. g., the retirement of some under GSA auspices rather than unique Agency control).

c. I believe a better relationship should be established between the archives, historical, and records management programs. Inclusion or at least identification of significant records or documents in our archives and historical programs could permit us to dispose of material currently captured in all-inclusive files.

3. This is a highly complex subject and has no immediate and easy answers. It does require continuing senior-level attention, which I will endeavor to give it.

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W. E. Colby  
Executive Director-Comptroller

Attachment

cc: DD/S  
IG

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